

AMENDMENTS TO CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) An interactive educational toy apparatus comprising:
an indicium containing structure including an indicium, a back structure, and a first attachment element, the indicium containing structure shaped for placement in a single orientation; and
a base unit capable of being attached to a vertical surface, wherein the base unit includes:
a housing,
a receiving region comprising a window and adapted to receive the indicium containing structure, wherein the window is adapted to receive the indicium containing structure in the single orientation,
a processor unit in the housing,
a speaker coupled to the processor unit,
a reader coupled to the processor unit, and
a second attachment element coupled to the housing,
wherein the indicium containing structure is capable of being attached to the base unit using the first attachment element and the base unit is capable of being attached to the vertical surface using the second attachment element and wherein the reader is capable of identifying the indicium containing structure based on the back structure in response to the receiving region having received the indicium containing structure.

2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the first attachment element

comprises a first magnet, and wherein the second attachment element comprises a second magnet.

3. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the indicium is three-dimensional.

4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 3 wherein the indicium is a letter, a number, a symbol, or a portion of an animal.

5. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 4 further comprising a plurality of the indicium containing structures, wherein the plurality of indicium containing structures represent the alphabet.

6. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the indicium containing structure comprises a part of an animal.

7. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the ~~base unit~~ includes a window ~~[[that]]~~ is cooperatively structured to receive the back structure of the indicium containing structure.

8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 7 wherein the back structure includes a structural code.

9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the base unit includes a

depressible switch in a receiving region that receives the indicium containing structure, and wherein the depressible switch is upwardly biased in the absence of pressure on the indicium containing structure when the indicium containing structure is attached to the base unit.

10 through 16. (Cancelled)

17. (Currently Amended) An interactive educational toy apparatus comprising:
an indicium containing structure including a three-dimensional indicium, a structural code, and a first magnet, the indicium containing structure shaped for placement in a single orientation; and

a base unit capable of being attached to a vertical surface, wherein the base unit includes:

a housing,

a window adapted to receive the indicium containing structure, wherein the window is adapted to receive the indicium containing structure in the single orientation,

a processor unit in the housing,

a memory unit coupled to the processor unit, wherein the memory unit comprises code for audio associated with the indicium,

a speaker coupled to the processor unit,

a reader coupled to the processor unit, and

a second magnet adapted to attract the vertical surface so that the base unit is attached to the surface;

wherein the reader is capable of identifying the indicium containing structure based on the structural code in response to the indicium containing structure attaching to the base unit by said first magnet.

18. (Original) The interactive educational toy apparatus of claim 17 wherein the indicium is one of a sequence of ordered indicia, and wherein the apparatus further comprises a set of indicium containing structures respectively including the ordered sequence of indicia.

19. (Original) The interactive educational toy of claim 18 wherein the sequence of ordered indicia is the alphabet or an ordered set of numbers.

20. (Original) The interactive educational toy of claim 18 wherein the audio associated with the indicium comprises audio for the name of the indicium and one or more phonetic pronunciations associated with the indicium.

21. (Currently Amended) An interactive apparatus comprising:
a housing;
a receiving region comprising a window and adapted to receive an indicium containing structure that is attachable therewith using a first attachment element, the indicium containing structure comprising a structural code disposed on a back side thereof for identifying said indicium containing structure and shaped for placement in a single orientation, wherein the receiving region is shaped to accept the indicium containing structure in a single orientation;

a processor unit disposed in the housing;

a reader coupled to the processor unit, said reader for identifying said indicium containing structure based on said structural code;

a speaker coupled to the processor unit, said speaker for rendering audio output related to the indicium containing structure; and

a second attachment element coupled to the housing for attaching said housing to a substantially vertical surface.

22. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 21 wherein the first attachment element and the second attachment element are magnets.

23. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 21 wherein the indicium is three-dimensional.

24. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 23 wherein the indicium is selected from the group comprising: a letter; a number; a symbol; and at least a portion of an animal.

25. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 21 further comprising a plurality of indicium containing structures, each indicium containing structure operable to be attached within said receiving region.

26. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 25 wherein said plurality of indicium containing structures represent the alphabet.

27. (Cancelled)

28. (Cancelled)

29. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 21 wherein the reader is operable to read said structural code.

30. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 21 further comprising a depressible switch disposed in the receiving region and wherein the depressible switch is activated in response to external pressure applied to the indicium containing structure when the indicium containing structure is attached.

31. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 30 wherein the processor, in response to activation of the depressible switch, is operable to cause said speaker to render the audio output related to the indicium containing structure.

32. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 21 wherein the processor is operable to recognize the indicium containing structure when attached within said receiving region and, in response thereto, the processor is further operable to cause said speaker to render the audio signal associated with the indicium containing structure.

33. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 21 wherein the audio

signal is instructional information.

34. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 26 wherein the audio signal comprises a name of a letter of the alphabet represented by the respective indicium containing structure.

35. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 26 wherein the audio signal comprises a phonetic sound of a letter of the alphabet represented by the respective indicium containing structure.

36. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 21 wherein the receiving region is sized to receive a plurality of indicium containing structures.

37. (Currently Amended) An interactive apparatus comprising:
a housing operable to be removably attached to a substantially vertical surface with an attachment;
a window adapted to receive an indicium containing structure, wherein the window is adapted to receive the indicium containing structure in a single orientation;
a processor unit disposed within the housing;
a memory unit coupled to the processor unit and comprising code for identifying a plurality of indicium containing structures and for rendering a plurality of audio informations respectively associated with the plurality of indicium containing structures;
a speaker coupled to the processor unit for rendering the audio informations; and
a reader coupled to the processor unit for reading a structural code disposed on

an indicium containing structure when said indicium containing structure is removably attached to the housing.

38. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 37 wherein the plurality of indicium containing structures are a sequence of ordered indicia.

39. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 38 wherein the sequence of ordered indicia is alphanumeric.

40. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 37 wherein each of said plurality of audio informations is associated with a respective indicium containing structure and comprises an identification of the respective indicium containing structure and one or more phonetic pronunciations associated with the respective indicium containing structure.

41. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 37 wherein the processor is operable to recognize a first indicium containing structure when attached to said housing and, in response thereto, the processor is further operable to cause said speaker to render a first audio information associated with the first indicium containing structure.

42. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 41 wherein the processor is operable to recognize a second indicium containing structure when attached to said housing and, in response thereto, the processor is further operable to cause said

speaker to render a second audio information associated with the second indicium containing structure.

43. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 37 wherein said code uniquely identifies the indicium containing structure.

44. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 37 wherein said attachment is a magnet and wherein said vertical surface is metallic.

45. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 37 wherein said memory comprises a removable cartridge insertable in said housing and wherein said removable cartridge comprises audio informations of said plurality of audio informations.

46. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 37 wherein the plurality of audio informations comprises names of letters of the alphabet represented by the plurality of indicium containing structure.

47. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 37 wherein the plurality of audio informations comprises phonetic sounds of letters of the alphabet represented by the plurality of indicium containing structure.

48 through 60. (Cancelled)

61. (Currently Amended) An interactive apparatus comprising:

a housing;

a receiving region of said housing comprising a window and adapted to receive a predetermined number of indicium containing structures that are removably attachable therewith, the indicium containing structures comprising structural codes for identifying said indicium containing structures, wherein the window is adapted to receive the indicium containing structures in the single orientation;

a processor unit disposed in the housing;

a speaker coupled to the processor unit;

a memory coupled to said processor unit and comprising a plurality of audio informations wherein a different audio information is associated with a set of unique combinations of indicium containing structures;

a reader coupled to the processor unit and for identifying the indicium containing structures based on said structural codes; and

an attachment element coupled to the housing for removably attaching said housing to a substantially vertical surface.

62. (Previously Presented) An interactive apparatus as described in Claim 61 wherein said reader is operable to read said structural code associated with an indicium containing structure when attached to said receiving region.

63. (Cancelled)

64. (Previously Presented) An interactive apparatus as described in Claim 61 wherein said processor is operable to identify a first indicium containing structure and a

second indicium containing structure when both are attached to said housing and further operable to access said memory to obtain a first audio information associated with a combination of said first and said second indicium containing structures.

65. (Previously Presented) An interactive apparatus as described in Claim 64 wherein said processor is operable cause said speaker to render said first audio information.

66. (Previously Presented) An interactive apparatus as described in Claim 65 wherein said processor is operable to identify a third indicium containing structure and a fourth indicium containing structure when both are attached to said housing and further operable to access said memory to obtain a second audio information associated with a combination of said third and said fourth indicium containing structures.

67. (Previously Presented) An interactive apparatus as described in Claim 66 wherein said processor is operable cause said speaker to render said second audio information.

68. (Previously Presented) An interactive apparatus as described in Claim 61 wherein said predetermined number is two.

69. (Previously Presented) An interactive apparatus of Claim 61 wherein the plurality of audio informations comprises names of letters of the alphabet represented by the plurality of indicium containing structure.

70. (Previously Presented) An interactive apparatus of Claim 61 wherein the plurality of audio informations comprises phonetic sounds of letters of the alphabet represented by the plurality of indicium containing structure.